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'Vietnam Is Not Over' Parley on War Learns

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LOS ANGELES, Feb. 10 — On the sun-dappled campus of the University of Southern California, the Vietnam War issue was refought this week at an academic conference with some of the anger and confusion that surrounded the war itself.

The four-day meeting on the lessons of Vietnam was supposed to be a dispassionate analysis of the war, 10 years after the signing of the Paris peace accords and the withdrawal of the last American combat forces, in January 1973.

The 65 participants included some of the best-known Vietnam journalists and antiwar activists, with a sprinkling of former generals and Government officials. Among them were Frances FitzGerald, author of the best-selling "Fire in the Lake," and Daniel Ellsberg, who says he gave the Pentagon Papers to The New York Times.

But instead the conference was often emotional and acrimonious, and the main lesson that emerged was that "Vietnam is not over," in the words of Daniel K. Wagoner, a former Army Ranger who served in Vietnam in 1969.

'Will Never Be Over'

"Vietnam will never be over," said Mr. Wagoner, who was angry that as a veteran he had to pay to attend the conference and so, with a group of other veterans, used his Ranger training to crash a dinner for the participants. "Rangers don't die, they recon the valley of death," Mr. Wagoner said in the macabre argot of Vietnam.

The meetings, which were held in a densely packed campus theater and which ended last night, provided a forum for people to bear witness to the wounds and divisiveness of the war.

Journalists clashed with one another over how accurate their reporting of the war was. A former general contended that Washington had hamstrung the military by not giving it enough troops or authority to cut off North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia. Three former agents of the Central Intelligence Agency said they knew how the agency planted false information with well-known journalists to mislead American opinion about the war.

Vietnamese refugees shouted at former antiwar activists sympathetic to Hanoi and asked why they did not show as much concern for the hundreds of thousands of people incarcerated by the Communists after the war and for the plight of the boat people.

Above all, dozens of Vietnam veter-

and others in three-piece business suits, berated the Government, the press and the American public for ignoring them.

"It's too late to punish anybody for what happened, but we have got to make the Government do something to help these people," Nicholas Road, a former paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division, said after a panel discussion on veterans' problems. "I'm still trying to catch about 10 years of my life that I lost after my 19th birthday."

Long lines formed after each panel discussion as members of the audience took over the microphone and delivered their own speeches, delaying some sessions till midnight.

"For the past three days I've listened to some of the most self-righteous S.O.B.'s tell us about how they reported the war," said another veteran, Rick Berg. "We've been trying to talk for years. But they've been talking for us. What is this?"

Among the scheduled speakers were David Halberstam, a former New York Times correspondent in Vietnam and author of "The Best and the Brightest"; Harrison Salisbury, a former Times editor who was among the first reporters to visit Hanoi in the war; Peter Arnett, who won two Pulitzer Prizes while reporting on Vietnam for The Associated Press, and Morley Safer of CBS News.